

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 12696 111858Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----091310 111900Z /46

P R 111845Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0122
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
EC COLLECTIVE
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BONN 12696

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, UNSC, PINT, LE, IS, SY, GW
SUBJECT: LEBANON: CONTINUING EFFORTS TO DEFUSE THE
CRISIS

REFS: A) STATE 171142; B) STATE 172481; C) BREMEN
410

1. THE FRG VIEW OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON IS SIMILAR
TO OUR OWN AND BONN, BOTH BILATERALLY AND AS EC
PRESIDENT, HAS TAKEN STEPS PARALLEL TO THOSE
DESCRIBED IN REFTEL A.

2. EMBOFF MADE PRESENTATION OUTLINED REFTELS A AND
B TO FONOFF ON JULY 10. FONOFF DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE
EASTERN AFFAIRS BOEKER RESPONDED BY AGREEING WITH
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DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. HE SAID
THE FRG BELIEVED IT PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO CONVINCE
THE CHRISTIAN RIGHTIST LEADERSHIP THAT THERE WAS NO
FUTURE IN A SEPARATE CHRISTIAN STATE GUARANTEED BY
ISRAEL. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT SOME CHRISTIAN
RIGHTISTS NAIVELY BELIEVED THAT A PERPETUATION OF THE
CRISIS COULD LEAD TO SUCH A STATE. THE FRG AMBASSADOR

HAD, ON INSTRUCTIONS, SPOKEN WITH ONE OF CHAMOUN'S SONS IN AN EFFORT TO DISUADE HIM FROM THIS VIEW. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER CHAMOUN'S SON HAD TAKEN THIS APPROACH SERIOUSLY. BOEKER SAID THE FRG WOULD CONTINUE TO URGE RESTRAINT ON CHRISTIAN RIGHTIST LEADERS AND ATTEMPT TO DISABUSE THEM OF THEIR ILLUSIONS REGARDING A SEPARATE STATE.

3. BOEKER SAID THE SYRIANS HAD REACTED "VERY ANGRILY" TO THE EC DECLARATION ON LEBANON (REFTEL C). KHADDAM HAD CALLED IN THE GERMAN AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS AND THE BRITISH DCM AND IN STRONG TERMS SAID SYRIA WAS BEING UNFAIRLY BLAMED FOR HAVING STARTED THE PRESENT CRISIS. ON A MORE POSITIVE NOTE, KHADDAM HAD SAID SYRIA FULLY SUPPORTED A SOVEREIGN LEBANON AND WAS EAGER TO SEE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISH FULL CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. KHADDAM SAID ASSAD HAD STRONGLY URGED SARKIS NOT TO RESIGN AND THE SYRIANS HOPED THAT HE WOULD REMAIN IN OFFICE. MOREOVER SYRIAN TROOPS IN LEBANON HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ACT WITH RESTRAINT AND USE THEIR WEAPONS ONLY IN CASES OF EXTREME PROVOCATION.

4. BOEKER SAID SARKIS, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE FRG AMBASSADOR, HAD BEEN VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE EC DECLARATION. HE HAD, HOWEVER, APPEARED TO BE VERY DEPRESSED. THE FRG AMBASSADOR HAD STRONGLY URGED
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SARKIS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE AND THE GERMANS WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO.

5. THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO HAD ALSO CALLED ON RIAD OF THE ARAB LEAGUE. RIAD HAD TERMED THE EC DECLARATION VERY HELPFUL. HE SAID SYRIAN ATTACKS ON CHRISTIAN CAMPS WERE POTENTIALLY MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE 1976 CIVIL WAR. RIAD BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE DANGER OF A RESIGNATION BY SARKIS HAD BEEN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY FORESTALLED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PLANS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN12696
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780284-0091
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780776/aaaacmag.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 720acf77-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 171142, 78 STATE 172481, 78 BREMEN 8
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2057826
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANON: CONTINUING EFFORTS TO DEFUSE THE CRISIS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PINT, LE, IS, SY, GE, UNSC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/720acf77-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014